

New Residents' Kits...Observations

When we visit an area we call in to the local council offices and ask for a 'New Resident's kit.

Would you believe that some councils do not have them! It is interesting to hear the responses from the staff at reception....which sometimes range from, 'Oh, we're about to do a new one', to 'There are a few pamphlets in the stand behind you'. Councils that want to attract new residents and/or economic development need to have excellent kits.

We do not usually tell staff that we are researching a particular area.

We were in a coastal community in South Australia and Jill went and asked for a new residents' kit...to which she was told there were none...Owen went in and received one....it must have been the male charm! A council in northern New South Wales wanted to charge for information!

Receptionists are 'Directors Of First Impressions', it is important they know and have access to up to date information.

The Singleton Shire Council in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales has a comprehensive kit that includes a CD on economic development opportunities, whilst south of Perth at Mandurah, their council had enough information for both of us to carry away! When we asked about alternative accommodation (eg: retirement resorts), information was photocopied and explained fully by helpful staff. One of Queensland's most impressive new resident's kits comes from Bribie Island...it is updated every two weeks by volunteers at the Bribie Island Tourist Information Centre.

Whilst websites are useful, 'hard' copies of information is usually preferable.

What types of information could be in a kit?

As a minimum.....there could be:

- Directory of streets
- Names of councillors
- Information about council services, such as council departments, libraries, rubbish collection, by-laws).
- Contact names and addresses for essential services, such as gas and electricity.
- A clearly written guide, and map to owning pets (eg: where you can walk them, vaccinations, veterinary services).
- A booklet outlining community groups, service clubs, recreational clubs, information on the economic development of the area, business networks, plans for the future.